

Harrison Heritage News

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CYNTHIANA - HARRISON COUNTY MUSEUM - TEN YEARS OF PRESERVING HARRISON COUNTY HISTORY

by George D. Slade and Harold Slade

Introduction -

The Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum today occupies five rooms in the building where it was born plus a three-room annex in the old Rohs Theater building. All this space is filled to overflowing with items of interest that relate to the town and county. The Museum is operated entirely by volunteers. It is not tax supported. All operating expenses, including rent, utilities, etc., are paid by contributions received from individuals and organizations. This July (2004) marks the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Museum. We thought that you might like to know something about its birth. Webster defines a museum as "an institution devoted to the procurement, care, study and display of objects of lasting interest." You can observe hundreds of these objects at our museum. (George D. Slade)



This rare wicker body basket was an early donation to the museum by Whaley-McCarty Funeral Home. Also shown is a small collection of fans with religious themes, handed out to churches as advertisements by funeral homes. Photo, June 1995, George D. Slade.

Birth of the Museum

George D. Slade

For several meetings, the members of the Harrison County Historical Society had discussed the possibility of developing a museum relating to our local history. Martha Barnes suggested to me that I put together in writing some tid-bits of local history relating to things of our past. She would type these and submit to the Cynthiana Democrat for publi-

cation. Each column would have a concluding statement reminding the reader that we were trying to promote the opening of a local history museum. Martha gave the column the title, "MUSEUM MUSINGS." The First Museum Musings appeared in the March 31, 1994, issue of the Democrat.

At the May 1994 historical society meeting, as usual, the museum subject came up. After considerable discussion, I said, "Let's stop talking about it and do something." Martha Barnes began searching for a suitable location. She found that the north side storeroom of the Poindexter-owned building on the east side of Walnut Street was vacant. Robert Poindexter was approached about renting it for the location of the museum. He agreed to rent it at a reasonable rate. Something had finally been accomplished.

A number of meetings were held to discuss how we were to proceed. Gradually the

word was spread that the making of a museum was in progress. Ben Fritz had told us that he had a number of things that he would donate for a museum. John Sorrell said that there were a number of items in the upstairs of the former location of J&R Drugs on Pike Street, including showcases, old prescription bottles, labels, and so forth. We could have anything there that we wanted. Harold Slade and I visited the site and looked things over. Most of it was covered with a layer of coal soot and dust. We noticed among the many objects a life-sized, disassembled Santa Claus that we recalled had been displayed in the downstairs window each Christmas. It, too, was covered with soot and dust.

Using a two-wheeled pushcart, Harold and I began the task of transporting the various items that we had selected to the museum site on Walnut Street. At the end of each day's work, Harold and I resembled coal miners exiting a mine after a day of working underground. We pursued this activity for several days. Following the moving was the chore of removing the grime from the various objects. Arriving home each night a shampoo and shower was the order of the day.

(Continued on page 3)

Harrison County Historical Society

Jane Adams Whitehead

Jerry Jenkins on Woodworking and the Folk Art Tradition

Meeting Thursday, June 17, 2004, Cynthiana Public Library meeting room - 7 p.m. Jerry Jenkins discussed woodworking and explained how he became interested in woodworking, showing the attentive audience woodworking tools used. He displayed examples of his work and noted a preference for bass wood for his carving projects. He showed examples of very tiny carvings as well as complicated wooden chains carved from a solid piece of wood. Thank you Mr. Jenkins for presenting one of our most interesting meetings.

NEXT MEETING

July 15, 2004

The Society welcomes back Jim Swinford, who will discuss the Boy Scouts, their history, the scouting movement in Cynthiana, and the current Boy Scout troop. The meeting is open to the public at 7 pm in the Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library on N. Main St.

Historic Battle Grove Cemetery - Self-Guided Tour by Charles Feix

A thirty-page, spiral bound guidebook, which describes 22 monuments and includes a guide map, is \$5.00 at the cemetery office. To order by mail, send \$7.00, which includes postage and handling, to: Battle Grove Cemetery, 531 East Pike Street, Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031.

Harrison County, Ky., History on the Internet:

- *Harrison Heritage News* back issues are archived on the Historical Society link found at cynthianaky.com. (Internet search engine www.google.com searches these back issues.)
- Battle of Cynthiana - www.battleofcynthiana.org
- Hinkson and Ruddle Station Historical Society: www.ramsha1780.org

CYNTHIANA-HARRISON COUNTY MUSEUM

Martha Barnes

CELEBRATING FIRST TEN YEARS

This special edition of the Harrison Heritage news truly (to borrow the title of George's column) consists of museum musings - museum thoughts - museum ponderings. How wonderful to realize that our Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum is ten years old - and growing - and going strong!

Early in 1993, a group - very small in number - met "with the intent of incorporating under the name of Cynthiana-Harrison County Trust for the purpose of establishing, administering, and maintaining a Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum." After numerous meetings, this group - Dan Wiglesworth, George Slade, Herbert Allen Moore, Bob and Mary Grable, Steve Slade, and Martha Barnes - planned and publicized a community meeting which was held on March 23, 1993 at the public library. According to a report of the meeting in *The Cynthiana Democrat*, "the enthusiastic group of citizens attending brainstormed to determine areas of interest to be included in the museum. Possible locations and financing were discussed. Bill Kuster gave information regarding necessary procedures for incorporation."

The Cynthiana-Harrison County Trust, Inc. held its first annual meeting on June 8, 1993, at the Kentucky Utilities Building. Nine directors were elected on a three year rotating basis. They were Jim Bob Martin, Bob Grable, Judith Rawlings, Russell Whalen, Mary Grable, Alice Allen, Dan Wiglesworth, Robert Poindexter, and Martha Barnes.

Throughout the year, the Cynthiana-Harrison County Trust, Inc. grew in membership, sponsored several fund raising events, procured a grant from the Kentucky Arts Council, searched for a museum site, and along with the Harrison County Historical Society, became very involved and busy with the Bicentennial Celebration of Cynthiana and Harrison County. George wrote and submitted the first Museum Musings for publication in the *Democrat* on March 31, 1994. (Number 500 will be in print during this month.) Robert Poindexter graciously allowed us to rent the left downstairs side of our present location (which was then 13 S. Walnut). George, and cousin Harold, diligently worked to save treasures from J. and R. Drugstore which had closed. George and I gained permission to search the basement of the old Patton's store (now Especially for You). I missed the Kodak moment. Why didn't I take a picture of George carrying a naked mannequin down Main Street?

After much work and determination, the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum opened on Friday, July 22, 1994 - ten years ago - with only a few items on display, but with great dreams and lofty goals. Our membership (what a special, special group of people) has increased, we have rented more and more space, and we have nearly 2000 items in our collection - Cynthiana and Harrison County history preserved, displayed, and shared.

This year, we anticipate a great expansion and a wonderful future. We will need additional funding - and most importantly, we need additional volunteers. Come join us! Happy Anniversary! and ever onward!

(Birth of Museum - George D. Slade - Continued from page 1)

Recently, recalling those days, I located my wife, Helen's, daily journal for 1994. I found these entries. Tue. 7/23/94 - We went to meeting of members at Museum site on Walnut Street; Fri. 7/22/94 - Museum open today for first time. Good response. I went for awhile this afternoon; Mon. 7/25/94 - Harold and George spent today getting things out of old J&R Drugs for Museum; Tue. 7/26/94 - Harold and George worked most of day moving things from old J&R Drugs to Museum; Wed. 7/27/94 - Drizzling rain. George worked at Museum most of day; Fri., 7/29/94 - Museum open today for second time. Had good attendance. Received several more items for display; Tue. 8/2/94 - George worked at Museum straightening up. Martha Barnes and George went to Patton's old store basement. Found mannequin for Museum; Fri. 8/5/94 - Museum open today, good attendance. Several items came in. Jim Bob Martin and George took me to Milton Criswell's place to look at selections that Rogan Criswell is giving to the Museum; Thu. 8/9/94 - George and I went to Museum meeting tonight.

We note that on opening day the Museum started growing. Folks began bringing in items to be added to the displays and have bringing them in for ten years. We are proud of our Museum and grateful to those who have given of their time and resources to make it a success.

Early Days of the Museum - Harold Slade

George Slade has asked me to comment on the very early days of our museum. When we think of those days we remember the walls of our big front room as being almost bare and only a few items on our tables. We think we may have had fifteen or twenty items on display. Many folks have more pieces stored in their garages than we had that opening day, but we were bold enough to call it a museum. Those bare walls changed real fast as folks began bringing us their treasures even that very day. In short order we were adding items to our other two rooms.

Some of those early items on display were the three pieces from Ben Fritz - a cradle, buck saw and a hay knife. We already had the big bronze name plate of the National Bank on the wall and also hanging up there was the old L&N Railroad bulletin board from Robert Poindexter. George had

brought down the big old broad axe.

George and I also salvaged two watch display cases from the old drug store. These have proved to be very useful to the museum as we have displayed dozens and dozens of little tiny items in them. Another fixture saved from the drug store was the greeting card rack. This also has proved to be very useful and we have used part of it in the school section and part near the military section.

Virgie Wells had salvaged and stored many Cynthiana High School trophies. She brought these to the museum in the very early days and with the trophies came two big display cases made by Willie Wells. I think the Fire Department painted the cases before bringing them to us.

In those early days, Hallie and Jim Bob Martin were volunteers and they added many items to our collection. My

good friends Nora and Jack McCauley have brought us many items. I think Jack's favorite piece is the fireless cooker that had been in the family a long time. Then there was Dorothy's brother, Harold Rees Florence, who brought in many pieces that had belonged to their dad, Ezra Florence. When the big old iron kettle was brought in, I made a display of little Ezra helping his mother make soap in the kettle.

Many, many folks have been good to us. We no longer have a bare wall problem. Our problem now is where will we put the next piece? But that is a good problem and we hope all our friends will continue to think of us and keep bringing us their treasures for us to display.



(Left) This photo, taken during the early days of the museum, shows a cradle and buck saw donated by Ben Fritz on the almost-bare walls. Next to it is the original L&N bulletin board from the Cynthiana passenger depot demolished in 1961, donated by Robert Poindexter. Photo, August 1994, George D. Slade.



(Right) Museum visitors view a tobacco basket and other displays in this photo taken soon after the museum opened. Photo, August 1994, George D. Slade

Harrison County, Kentucky, Historical Publications

available from Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 112 South Walnut Street, P.O. Box 411, Cynthiana, KY 41031 (859-234-7179); open Fridays and Saturdays 10 AM - 5 PM:

- Boyd, Lucinda, *Chronicles of Cynthiana*. This is a reprint of the rare 1894 edition, which includes family histories, the famous account of David Sheely and his ghost, and other historical sketches and scattered accounts of persons and events connected with Cynthiana and Harrison County. 262 pp. Hardbound. \$20.00.

- June 1896 *Cynthiana Democrat* reprint. This was a special edition with biographical sketches and photographs of prominent men and women; many photographs of buildings; city/county government, church and school information is included. 24 pp. Paperback, 12"x18". \$5.00

- *Cynthiana Since 1790*. Virgil Peddicord (1986). Mr. Peddicord attempted to list the owners/businesses located on each lot from the founding of the city through the mid-1980s, including subdivisions added through 1923. 171 pp. (See separate index below). Paperback. \$20.00

- *Index - Cynthiana Since 1790* (William A. Penn). Mr. Peddicord did not prepare a comprehensive index for his book. This supplemental index contains about 3,500 names and a reference city street map. 30 pp. Paperback. \$3.00

- *Writings of Colonel William M. Moore, (1837-1927)* compiled by Andrew B. "Andy" Peak (2002). Includes 1921-1922 articles he wrote for the *Cynthiana Democrat* about his life. He was born in Harrison Co., but his family soon moved to Lewis Co., Mo.; in 1849 he moved back to Harrison Co., and he wrote much about life in Cynthiana in the early 1850s; he joined the CSA army in 1861 and fought in battles at Lexington, Mo.; Pea Ridge, Arkansas; and Shiloh, Tenn. The book includes several family obituaries and two letters that contain Moore genealogy. 10 family photographs; index; paperback, 71 pp. \$10.00/ \$3.00 shipping. Limited supply.

- *This Old House* by Katherine Wilson. Now back in print, this book tells the stories of twenty-six early Harrison Co. houses and the families who have occupied them. Much material on Harrison Co. history. Exterior and interior b & w photos of each house. Originally printed 1956-1957. 70 pp., new index, paperback. \$15.00 (An index is available for earlier editions, which had no index).

- *Cromwell's Comments*, by John M. Cromwell (1862-1951) is a reprint of Cromwell's 1928-1941 *Cynthiana Democrat* columns on the history of Cynthiana (Harrison Co., KY). A fine writer and historian, Mr. Cromwell covered many topics, including fairs, horses, fires, churches, businesses, cemeteries, government, Civil War, social events, and the Licking River. Sometimes he quoted old county histories, updated the information, and then added his personal reminiscences of interesting personalities from his career as banker and mayor. William A. Penn and George D. Slade, editors. Paperback; preface; 2 maps; 21 photos; 4 illus.; annotated; index; 200 pp. (*Cynthiana Democrat*, 2002), \$10 plus \$3 shipping.

Shipping/handling for above books: Please include a handling and shipping fee of \$4.00 for first book (unless otherwise noted above), \$2.50 for each additional book; you will be notified if special shipping fees apply. No shipping fee on *Index - Cynthiana Since 1790*, if ordered with the book. Make checks/money orders payable to "Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum." No credit cards. Prices/fees subject to change.

Membership - Harrison County Historical Society- Join Today

Send name and address with dues to: Harrison County Historical Society, P. O. Box 411, Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031. Membership fee \$5.00 (includes Harrison Heritage News) due annually January 1.

Cynthiana Civil War Driving Tour Brochure Available

Visit the Harrison County Chamber next to the Old Jail on W. Pike Street or the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum for a free tour guide brochure. The illustrated guide includes photos of the commanders, an 1862 battle print, and a detailed map. Visit the Civil War interpretive sign in front of the courthouse.

July 17, 2004, will be the 142nd anniversary of the First Battle of Cynthiana.